

fanatical party, the disastrous effects of whose agitation on the health of our soldiers is recognised and lamented by all military, and by most sensible, men.

Is life as it really exists — with the vice and degradation current among the lower classes, and the greed, the selfishness, and the sensuality prevalent in the classes above — to be in future ignored by the novelist who, in the case of M. Zola, really holds the historian's pen? Is *actual* life to be no longer described in fiction, simply because the withdrawal of the veil that shrouds it displays a state of things unadapted to the contemplation — not of grown-up men and women, but of "the young person of fifteen," who has the works of all Mr. Mudie's novelists to feast upon? This certainly was not the law in the days of Defoe, Swift, and Fielding, and it needed a canting age, that can gloat over the filthiest Divorce cases, while pretending to be greatly shocked at M. Zola's bluntness; but above all, it required a weak-kneed Government, with one who was once a literary man himself at its head, [Lord Salisbury] to strain the law in a way that an educated alderman refused to do the other day in reference to Boccaccio's "Decameron."

Time, we are told, brings round its revenges, and the books burnt by the common hangman in one age come to be honoured in the next. England may render itself ridiculous in the eyes of Europe by visiting the works of M. Zola with the same kind of condemnation which the civilised world has accorded to the writings of the degraded Marquis de Sade; still it requires no particular foresight to predict that a couple of generations hence, when the tribe of prejudiced scribes — who, ignorant for the most

part of their own country's literature, now  
join in the hue and cry  
against M. Zola — are relegated to their  
proper obscurity, the  
works of the author of the Rougon-  
Macquart Family will take  
rank as classics among the productions of  
the great writers of the  
past.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HBNBT

YIZETBLLT.